

What is claimed is:

1. A surface-treated ultrafine metal powder, wherein a sulfur-containing compound of not less than one element selected from the group consisting of Y, Zr, and La is present on a surface of a particle of the ultrafine metal powder.

2. The surface-treated ultrafine metal powder of claim 1, wherein said sulfur-containing compound is present in an amount such that the elements contained in said sulfur-containing compound are in a total amount of 0.05% to 6% by mass and S contained in the sulfur-containing compound is in an amount of 0.04% to 4% by mass, each relative to the ultrafine metal powder as a whole.

3. The surface-treated ultrafine metal powder of claim 1, wherein a metal element of said ultrafine metal powder is one selected from the group consisting of Ni, Cu, Ag, Mo, W, Co, and Ta.

4. The surface-treated ultrafine metal powder of claim 1, wherein said ultrafine metal powder is a powder of an alloy of Ni containing one or not less than two elements selected from the group consisting of V, Cr, Nb, Mo, Ta, W, Zr, Y, La, Mg, Ti, Ba, and Ca.

5. The surface-treated ultrafine metal powder of claim 1, wherein said ultrafine metal powder is a powder of an alloy of Cu containing one or not less than two elements selected from

the group consisting of V, Cr, Nb, Mo, Ta, W, Zr, Y, La, Mg, Ti, Ba, and Ca.

6. A method for producing a surface-treated ultrafine metal powder, the method comprising the steps of:

adding an aqueous solution containing a sulfate of not less than one element selected from the group consisting of Y, Zr, and La to a slurry having the ultrafine metal powder dispersed therein; and

performing a surface treatment for forming a sulfur-containing compound of not less than one element selected from the group consisting of Y, Zr, and La on a surface of said ultrafine metal powder.

7. A conductive metal paste produced by using the surface-treated ultrafine metal powder as recited in any one of claims 1 to 5.

8. A multilayer ceramic capacitor produced by using the surface-treated ultrafine metal powder as an internal electrode as recited in any one of claims 1 to 5.